WAR OF THE GODS
15
BATMAN
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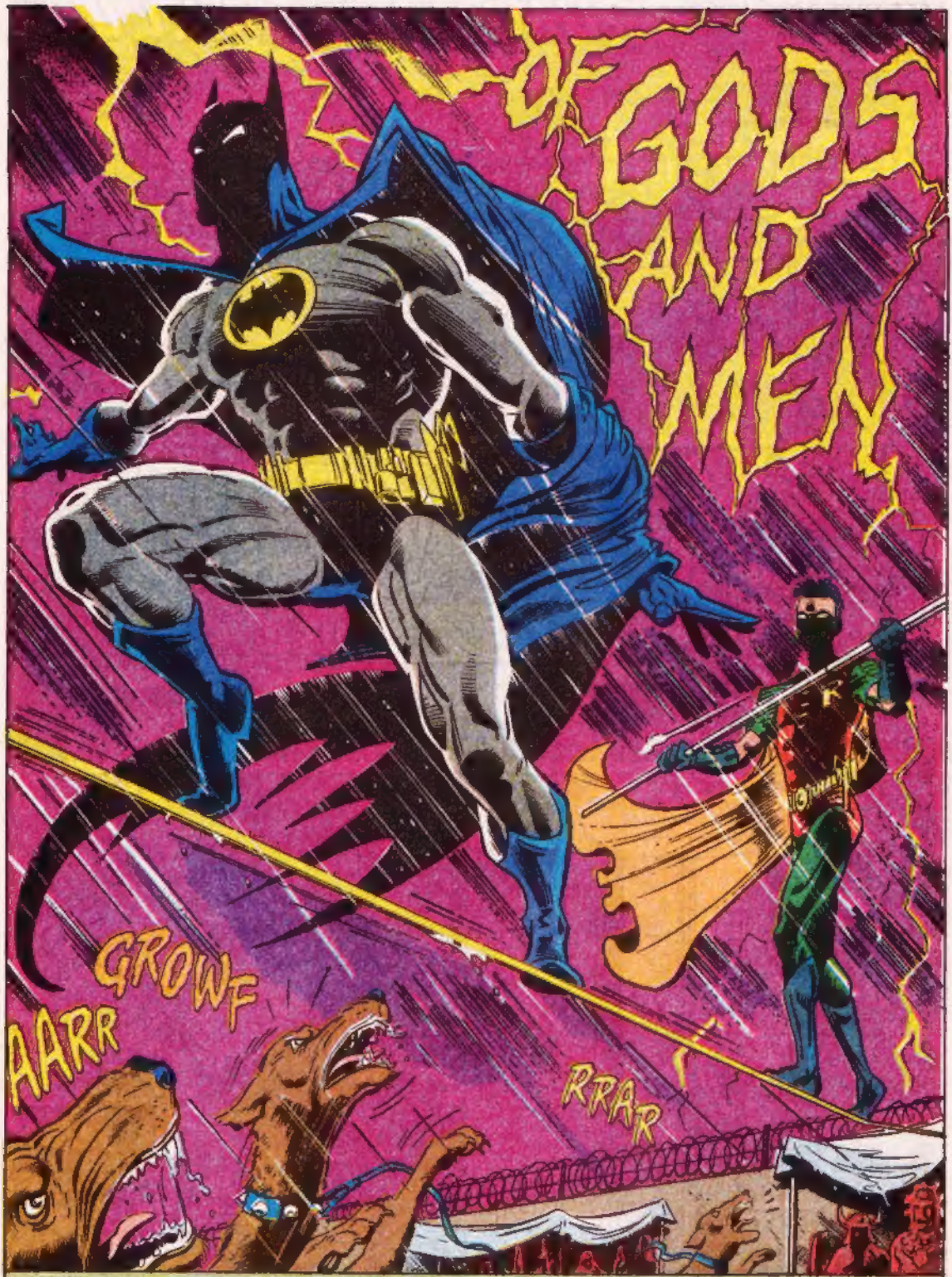

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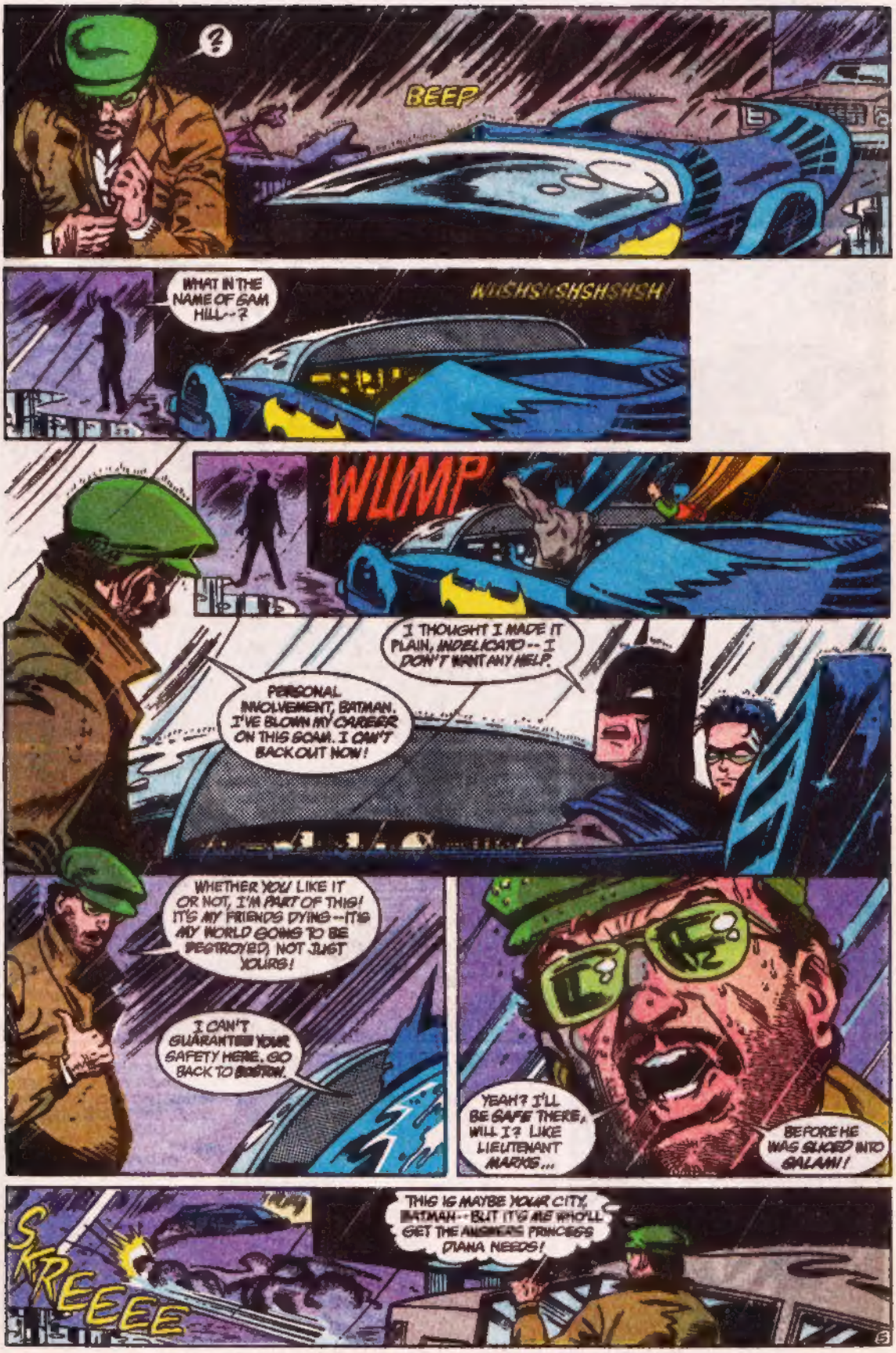
LUCK'S HOLDING SO FAR. NOISE OF THE STORM'S DROWNING OUT THE DOGS' HOWLS.
RRUMBLL LL LLLLL
MAYBE THE GODS ARE WITH US ON THIS ONE.
GRR
SNAP
THEN AGAIN--
KRASHH!
YOU HEAR SOMETHING, RINGO?
--WHEN COULD YOU EVER TRUST A GOD?
PROBABLY JUST THE STORM SPOOKIN' THE DOGS, MR. ROLLING.
BETTER CHECK ANYWAY. THOSE GARGOYLES ARE WAY TOO VALUABLE TO TAKE ANY CHANCES!
I TOLD YOU BOSS-- NOTHIN'!
GUESS I'M JUST SPOOKED MYSELF. QUICKER WE FIND A BUYER FOR THESE, THE HAPPIER--
WHAT THE DEVIL--?
2

AAAAH!
BOSS!
D-DON'T SHOOT, YOU FOOL! YOU'LL HIT ME!
EVENING, MARTY.
Y-YOU!
APOLOGIES FOR GETTING YOU WET, BUT I FIGURE THIS WAY WE'LL SKIP THE GUNPLAY!
HOLD ON, BOSS! I'M COMIN'!
TELL ME -- WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE THEMYSCIRAN GOBLET?
NEVER HEARD OF IT!
I'M A LEGITIMATE BUSINESSMAN! YOU GOT NO RIGHT TO TREAT ME LIKE THIS!
DON'T I?
DON'T... PLEASE...
THE THEMYSCIRAN GOBLET?
I DUNNO ANYTHING CONCRETE! IT NEVER WENT ON THE OPEN MARKET... THERE WAS SOME RUMOR ABOUT ARKHAM ASYLUM -- I SWEAR THAT'S ALL I KNOW!
3

HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING? I TALKED, DIDN'T I?
AND I BELIEVE YOU.
YOU CAN'T LEAVE ME HERE--!
STICK AROUND, MARTY! THE POLICE WILL CUT YOU DOWN AS SOON AS I TELL THEM ABOUT THE STOLEN GARGOYLES!
SAME ANSWER AS ALL THE OTHERS -- AND ROLLINS WAS OUR LAST CHANCE OF A LEAD!
HE'S ALSO THE ONLY ONE WHO MENTIONED ARKHAM.
VLLIP
VLLIP
CHAK
ZWEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
CHAK
PAF
WONDER WOMAN TOLD ME SHE AND INDELICATO HAD CHECKED THERE. MAYBE THERE'S SOMETHING THEY MISSED.
PAF
I GUESS WONDER WOMAN HAD TO ASK FOR MY HELP. I'M A DETECTIVE... I KNOW GOTHAM.
KRAK
OOM
BUT I WISH SHE HADN'T.


?
BEEP
WHAT IN THE NAME OF SAM HILL--?
WUSHSHSHSHSH!
WUMP
I THOUGHT I MADE IT PLAIN, INDELICATO -- I DON'T WANT ANY HELP.
PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT, BATMAN. I'VE BLOWN MY CAREER ON THIS SCAM. I CAN'T BACK OUT NOW!
WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT, I'M PART OF THIS! IT'S MY FRIENDS DYING -- IT'S MY WORLD GOING TO BE DESTROYED, NOT JUST YOURS!
I CAN'T GUARANTEE YOUR SAFETY HERE. GO BACK TO BOSTON.
YEAH? I'LL BE SAFE THERE, WILL I? LIKE LIEUTENANT MARKS...
BEFORE HE WAS SLICED INTO SALAMI!
SKREEEE
THIS IS MAYBE YOUR CITY, BATMAN -- BUT IT'S ME WHO'LL GET THE ANSWERS PRINCESS DIANA NEEDS!

HE WAS PROBABLY PLANTING A TRACER, YOU KNOW.
AUTO-ALARM SAYS HE WAS DEFINITELY PLANTING A TRACER--
--BUT AT LEAST THIS WAY WE KNOW EXACTLY WHERE HE IS!
ARKHAM ASYLVM FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE
--IT WAS A NIGHTMARE, BATMAN!
TWO NURSES KILLED-- GOOD MEN, BOTH OF THEM-- AND TWO PATIENTS. THE CHEETAH CUT THEM TO RIBBONS!
WAS IT A SOLO ESCAPE? ANYONE ELSE LEAVE WITH HER?
THREE OTHERS TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE CONFUSION --WE HAD TWO BACK WITHIN THE HOUR. THE THIRD'S STILL LOOSE.
OLD FRIEND OF YOURS, I BELIEVE-- KILLER CROC, HE CALLS HIMSELF.

ANOTHER GIFT FROM THE BLASTED GODS! BUT KILLER'S NOT THE PROBLEM TONIGHT. HE DOESN'T HAVE THE BRAINS TO BE INVOLVED IN THIS.
THIS IS A COMPLETE LIST OF INMATES...?
...NO. NO NAMES THERE I CAN CONNECT TO CHEETAH--OR THE GOBLET. WE DRAW ANOTHER BLANK!
THERE'S ONE AVENUE WE HAVEN'T EXPLORED--
ASYLUM
OFFICIAL RELEASES
RELEASED THE DAY BEFORE CHEETAH'S ESCAPE... IT'S TOO MUCH OF A COINCIDENCE. IT HAS TO BE HIM!
GOOD THINKING, ROBIN!
YOW! STEP OUT IN THE LIGHT!
ER... HI AGAIN!

DON'T GIVE UP EASILY, DO YOU, INDELICATO? THOUGHT I TOLD YOU TO GET OFF OUR CASE?
YOUR CASE? LISTEN, BIG MAN-- I'M THE COP!
YOU'RE A VIGILANTE! YOU'RE ILLEGAL! I COULD ARREST YOU ANY TIME I CHOOSE!
A NIGHT IN JAIL MIGHT BRING YOU DOWN OFF THAT HIGH HORSE!
WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THAT, HOTSHOT?
DOWN!
SCRAIII
SHRIP
BATMAN--!

SCRAIII
HOLD ON, ROBIN!
KLONK!
IT'S DAZED, MIGHT BE THE ONLY CHANCE I GET--
SPSH
WUMP!
BLONK!

LUNA 67
THAT'S IT! GOOD AND TIGHT--!
SCRAA!!
WHAT IS IT..?
ONE OF THE GODDESS CIRCE'S BEASTIAMORPHS!
SCRAWW
WONDER WOMAN WARNED US SUCH THINGS MAY HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO THWART OUR SEARCH FOR THE GOBLET.
SOME, SHE SAID, WERE MUTATED BEASTS, BUT OTHERS WERE ORIGINALLY HUMAN--
KRAK
IF THAT IS THE CASE, SHE'S SUFFERED ENOUGH.
THAT OUGHT TO KEEP HER OUT UNTIL THEY CAN PUT HER IN A SECURE CELL.
LUNA 67
STAY WITH HER, MORELICATO--
YOUR TRAIL ENDS NOW!
RITZ
10

DON'T BET ON IT, BIG SHOT!
ANYTHING YOU FOUND OUT, IS WAITING FOR ME!
THAT THING -- HARPY, OR WHATEVER IT WAS... I'D NEVER HAVE BELIEVED IT POSSIBLE!
UNFORTUNATELY, IT'S ALL TOO REAL. AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SO-CALLED GODS MEDDLE IN THE AFFAIRS OF MEN!
YOU'D THINK WE'VE MANAGED TO MESS UP THE WORLD ENOUGH ON OUR OWN, WITHOUT THEM NEEDING TO COMPOUND IT!
BUT CAN IT HAPPEN, WHAT WONDER WOMAN SAID? I MEAN -- MANKIND DYING, THE GODS BATTLING OVER A RUINED PLANET?
IN A WORD -- YES. THOUGH SHE BELIEVES THE KEY TO AVERTING THE TRAGEDY IS SOMEHOW BOUND UP WITH THE STOLEN GOBLET
"WITH GREAT POWER COMES GREAT RESPONSIBILITY," THEY USED TO SAY
NOW, EVEN THE GODS DON'T CARE!
FLARE, MY SACRED BOLTS! ECHO, MY STENTORIAN ROLLING THUNDER!

RRRUMMMMBL LL L
TELL ALL MANKIND -THE GREAT GOD ZEUS IS RETURNED FROM HIS CONFINEMENT! LET THE WORLD REJOICE!
HEY, BOSS! COME INSIDE! YOU'RE GONNA CATCH PNEUMONIA OUT THERE!
BLOW, WINDS FALL, RAIN!
WITLESS MORTAL!
AAGH!
ZZZT
I AM A GOD! WHY, EVEN IF I MYSELF COMMANDED IT, I COULD NOT TAKE ILL!
I - I'M SORRY, SIRE! I WASN'T THINKING...!
BY MY OWN STRICT LAWS, I OUGHT TO HAVE YOU THROWN IN THE PIT!
N-NO, SIRE! PLEASE--NOT THAT! HAVE MERCY--!
YOU ARE FORTUNATE MY TRIUMPHANT RETURN FROM THE STYGIAN BATTLE PREDISPOSES ME TO LENIENCY
STAY THERE WATCH MY STORM MARVEL AT MY POWER!
12

STYGIAN BATTLE?
HE MEANS ARKHAM.
CHEEZ! MAKES YOU WONDER WHY THEY LET HIM GO!
AND WHOSE STUPID IDEA WAS IT TO GIVE HIM THAT TASER..?
MAXIE ZEUS-- THE GANG BOSS WHO BELIEVES HE'S THE RULER OF THE GREEK GODS!
APT THAT CHEETAH SHOULD USE HIM TO GUARD THE GOBLET!
IF SHE DID WE THINK THAT BECAUSE MAXIE WAS RELEASED THE DAY AFTER CHEETAH ESCAPED--
--SHE GAVE HIM THE GOBLET BUT WE'VE GOT NO PROOF!
THEN LET'S GO SEE IF WE CAN FIND SOME!
SFSH
INSANE OR NO, MAXIE ZEUS IS NOBODY'S FOOL. IF THE GOBLET IS HERE, IT'S WELL GUARDED
HERE FIT THESE IN YOUR MASK
NIGHT-SIGHTS AN ADVANCED VERSION OF WHAT I USED AGAINST KING SNAKE. HAROLD WANTS THEM FIELD-TESTED
13

SEE WHAT I MEAN ABOUT MAXIE? CRAZY--
YOU CAN TELL HIM THEY WORK-- PERFECTLY!
--AND AN ORGANIZATIONAL GENIUS!
KRAKOOM!
HEY, THERE'S SOMEBODY DOWN BY THE STATUES!
BLAM
CHAK
BLAM
PEOW
14

GET OUT OF HERE! FIND COVER!
BUT--
NOW!
SPAK!
KRAK!
HOLD YOUR FIRE, GUYS! WE'LL CHECK IT!
BOOT!
AHH!
UMPH!
CHA-
-AAT!
NOK-NOK
SIRE! TROUBLE!
SIRE...? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
;Sniff!; OF COURSE I'M ALL RIGHT, OAF! MERELY...;Sniff!; ALLOWING MYSELF TO CATCH A COLD, THE BETTER TO UNDERSTAND MORTAL SUFFERING!
15

WE GOT DOUBLE TROUBLE, SIRE! INTRUDERS IN THE GROUNDS-- AN' FARO CALLED TO SAY THEY PICKED UP ANOTHER BY THE GATES!
WHAT? TRESPASSERS--? SNIFF! --IN THE HALLOWED HALLS OF OLYMPUS? TAKE THEM!
ONLY THEIR DEATHS WILL ASSUAGE MY WRATH!
AAAA-TCHOOO!
HOLD YOUR FIRE! YOU MIGHT HIT CHARLIE!
TOUGH, CHARLIE!
THE BOSS'LL HAVE US ALL IN THE PIT IF THIS CREEP GETS AWAY!
BRRRT!
WHERE IS HE? WHERE'D HE GO?
CHARLIE...!
JUST TOO MANY OF THEM--
UNNF!
LOOK OUT! THE STATUE--!

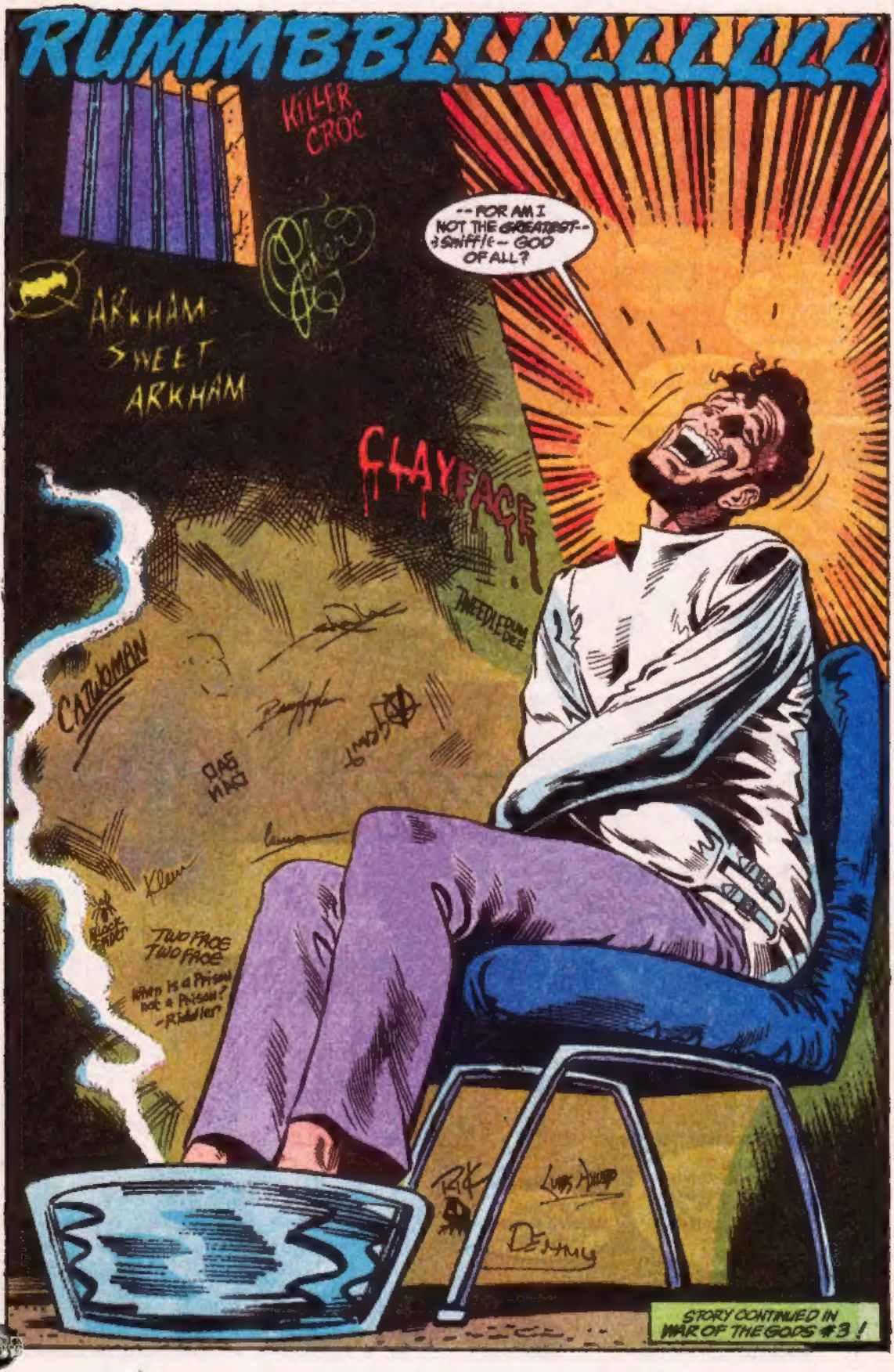
NO CHOICE BUT TO PLAY IT THEIR WAY!
ARGH!
RUNCH!
AAA!
I SUGGEST YOU THROW DOWN YOUR WEAPONS AND SURRENDER.
WH-WHERE?
NO-- ¡SNIFF!-- BATMAN!
YOU SURRENDER OR YOUR ACCOMPLICE DIES! ¡SNIFF!
¡NO DELICADO!
I'M SORRY, BATMAN--I SHOULD HAVE LISTENED!
BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER ABOUT ME! YOU HAVE TO GET THAT GOBLET BACK! FOR GOD'S SAKE, DON'T SURRENDER!
VSSK!
AAAAOH!
SILENCE!
WELL?
YOU WIN
THANK YOU.

SO YOU'RE HERE FOR THE--;Sniff;--THEMYSCIRAN GOBLET, ARE YOU? OR AS I PREFER TO CALL IT, THE ZEUSIAN GOBLET
YOUR QUEST IS AT AN END, MAN OF--;Sniff;--DARKNESS! BEHOLD--THE SACRED CHALICE!
MAXIE--
THAT'S GREAT ZEUS! OR--;Sniff!;--SIRE!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT STORY CHEETAH SPUN YOU--BUT IT WAS A LIE! I NEED THAT GOBLET IT MAY BE THE ONLY THING THAT CAN PREVENT DISASTER FOR US ALL!
YOU DARE THREATEN THE HIGH LORD? SACRILEGE!
VLIK
AAGGH!
AS WITH THE HOLY GRAIL, ONLY THE PURE MAY APPROACH THE ZEUSIAN GOBLET! ;Sniff!; YOU ARE A THING OF THE UTTER DEPTHS--
--FIT ONLY FOR SACRIFICE TO ITS SACRED PURITY!
NEXT TIME, I'M [redacted] ARE YOU, ROBIN--?
13

SPAZK
KWZZZZ
HEY?
LIGHT! LET THERE BE--SHIFF--LIGHT!
LOOK OUT, BOSS--
I'M WARNING YOU, BATMAN--THIS GEEK DIES...!
THIS IS IT--!
DONK!
THE POWERS OF DARKNESS WILL NEVER HAVE IT! I WOULD SOONER--SHIFF--SEE IT DESTROYED!

ZWEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
I THINK YOU'VE DONE ENOUGH FOR ONE NIGHT...
BOOT!
VIIIIIP
CHAK
...SHOE!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
JUST ABOUT
SORRY. I CUT IT A LITTLE CLOSE. I... I HAD TO BE SURE.
YOU DID WELL.
I ONLY HOPE IT ALL PROVES WORTHWHILE!
...DON'T UNDERSTAND. EVEN IF IT IS MAGIC, HOW'S IT GOING TO SAVE THE WORLD?
20

AFRAID THAT'S OUT OF MY PROVINCE. WE'LL FIND OUT WHEN INDELICATO ALERTS WONDER WOMAN.
SHE USUALLY KNOWS WHAT SHE'S DOING.
ALTHOUGH...
...EVIDENTLY NOT ALWAYS!
WHAT IS IT? WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
ROARRR
?
FLARE, MY BOLTS! ROLL, MY CRACKLING-- ;Sniff!;--THUNDER!
PROCLAIM TO MORTALS EVERYWHERE-- MIGHTY ZEUS HAS GONE ONCE MORE TO VIE WITH THE BLACK LORDS OF--;Sniff!;-- THE STYX!
BUT I WILL RETURN, STRONGER THAN EVER--
21


RUMMBBLLLLLLLLL
KILLER CROC
ARKHAM SWEET ARKHAM
--FOR AM I NOT THE GREATEST-- SNIFF!-- GOD OF ALL?
FLAYFACE
CATWOMAN
TWO FACE TWO FACE
What is a Prison but a Prison? -Riddler
STORY CONTINUED IN WAR OF THE GODS #3 !

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Dear Denny and Kelley,

I gotta tell ya...the last thing I ever expected to see in BATMAN is a '90s version of Bat-hound. What's next? Kathy Kane comes back from the dead?

Delmo (The Saint) Walters Jr.
1299 Grand Concourse
Bronx, NY 10452

How'd you guess, Delmo? (Just kidding, folks.)

. . . . .

Hey, Kelley—

Re: BATMAN #464

Was this "Spirit of the Beast" trilogy done because of Alan Grant's genuine concern over the plight of the Native Americans in this land or because of the tremendous critical and financial success of Costner's "Dances with Wolves" vehicle?

Just curious.

Uncle Elvis
17650 Dawson Rd.
Dawson Springs, KY 42408

Whoah. Talk about cynical.

Actually, Elvis, I think Alan wrote the story to get in good with the Native Americans so that the Hopi will offer him refuge in 1998 when the polar ice caps melt and tidal waves destroy anything below six thousand feet above sea level.

Well, you asked.

. . . . .

Dear Purveyors of Bat-Lore,

Despite the fact that I've been an avid comics fan since I was able to hold a comic upright and read it, I've only previously written one letter to a comic. What, you may ask, has caused me to write my second? A more or less "policy statement" informally announced in DETECTIVE COMICS #629, and brought about, apparently, by some readers' complaints of an overabundance of supernatural and occult elements in the Bat-titles.

I must vehemently disagree that the supernatural elements in the Batman-tales need to be toned down. Gothic literature is overflowing with ghosts, demons, vampires, and more concrete dark-hearted figures, and it is from this literary tradition that the Batman descends. This is more than aptly demonstrated through such excellent works as GOTHAM BY GASLIGHT and "Dark Knight/Dark City."

While the Batman is not, and should not be, supernatural in the same sense as Dr. Fate or Zatanna, the use of occult elements is an inherent aspect of the Batman mythos, and to take them away is to detract from the legend itself. Even when the Batman was first being published, Bob Kane and Bill Finger would meet in front of Poe Park, named for Edgar Allan Poe, a master of the Gothic genre, to discuss story ideas.

The Batman is a man living in a dark mansion, under a dark curse of death, which has taken his parents and his young ward from him. He is a man driven by darkness, but fighting for the light. He fights both villains firmly grounded in reality, and those who are otherworldly, though neither type is any less demonic in their intentions. He lives in a city named for the genre; the dark, mist-enshrouded Gotham is a battleground where the common man, whether in or out of costume, fights the subversive forces of darkness on a night-to-night basis.

If the concern comes from a misguided religious point of view, then nothing I can say is likely to change my fellow readers' minds, but never let it be said I was easily deterred. One of the fundamental tenets of the Christian Church is that Satan is, to put it colloquially, out to get us all. If the Batman is fighting these villains who have seemingly erupted from Hell, then I fail to see how this compromises that point of view, or the belief that these evil beings must be rejected.

Batman's uniqueness comes from the fact that his ongoing and accumulative legend is not just Gothic, but a genre unto itself, Gothic Noir. Without Gothic elements, it is simply a tale with Noir ambience, and without its Noir aspects it is simply a Gothic story. Together, when done well, these genres combine to form powerful and deeply striking tales of dark survival, but apart neither can sustain itself, because apart they become bland and ordinary.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice an opposing point of view.

Ken Boesem
R. R. #7, Box 17
Richbar School Site
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CANADA

You make a very impressive argument for what unfortunately seems to be the minority viewpoint. Most of our readers (at least the ones who write in) don't agree with you, Ken, and the use of the supernatural will be toned down somewhat in the near future. This decision was made not only in response to your letters, but to maintain a balance that even Denny feels has been skewed recently.

Thanks for your letter.

. . . . .

Denny, Kelley, Alan, Norm, Steve, Adrienne, and Todd—

Re: BATMAN #464—"Spirit of the Beast " Part Three: "Sacrifice"

Thank you for a very satisfactory conclusion to a relatively typical Grant/Breyfogle story. Still, this type of story is ideal for Batman and I thoroughly enjoy seeing him get out of Gotham and into a different environment. Batman is a character that lends himself well to atmosphere, which Alan Grant seems to have a good sense of. This was very reminiscent of some of your early Batman stories, Denny!

And Norm's artwork was as good as always, if not better, particularly on page 21 and the fight sequence on pages 12 to 15. And speaking of art, this was one of the best covers I have seen from Norm—if not for the pencilling, then most definitely the colouring. Now I realize Norm doesn't colour—but who *did* colour this cover? Was it Adrienne, or do you guys have a separate cover colourist? Kudos to whoever did it, anyway!

Before signing off, I'd just like to implore you not to turn Dog into Bat-hound, although I think he'll make a welcome addition to the "family." It was also nice to hear a voice from the Wayne Foundation. I'd like to see a lot more of Lucius Fox and the Wayne Foundation, and maybe even Selina Kyle in her civilian identity—someone to knock over Vicki Vale and make life as interesting for Bruce Wayne as Catwoman does for Batman.

David Cullen
Apt. #9, 1188 Wellington St.
Halifax, N.S. B3H 2Z8
CANADA

As you can see in #465, Bruce has his hands full already, David, but since Selina is a favorite of Alan and Peter's, it shouldn't be too long before she appears again.

The one and only Bob Le Rose handles the cover "colouring" and deserves every kudo he can get.

. . . . .

Dear Denny and Kelley:
Re: BATMAN #464

This issue was quite an unexpected pleasure. This year, as far as BATMAN goes, I have been strangely disappointed; for example, the first two issues of the "Spirit of the Beast" trilogy promised so much, and yet didn't deliver. BATMAN #464, however, broke the disappointing mold with quite an enjoyable story.

My first nod, surprisingly, is to Mr. Norm Breyfogle, who has been the target of much criticism from me this year. In this issue, however, I was floored by most of the art. The cover was one of the most eye-catching on the racks this week, and the splash page was the best Batman drawing by Norm in quite a while.

Alan's writing took about nine pages to get off the ground, but starting with page 10, "Sacrifice" was one of the best Batman stories that he's ever written. Page 10 itself was a completely unexpected scene, as we learned that not only is Two-Hearts Black Wolf's grandson, but Black Wolf was the child forced to eat human flesh so many years ago. Page 11 was a nice intro to the battle scenes, which literally took my breath away. Pages 12 through 15—with a special nod to the spectacular page 14—were no doubt the most exciting and best laid-out pages in any comic so far this year. A lot of artists have a weak area, and that is fight scenes. Norm Breyfogle has transcended the panel boundaries of comics in the past, and with BATMAN #464, he sets a new standard for action in comics. These four pages held me spellbound; I wanted to study them closely and flip excitedly to the next one at the same time.

Page 16 was another excellent moment in "Sacrifice"; I assume that the hologram was Harold's work. Page 18 was a total shock. I had no idea Black Wolf would sacrifice his grandson. That one scene is a great tribute to your writing, Alan; you caught me completely off-guard. Pages 19 and 20 were very touching moments; it's not often a writer can shift from the shocking to the sad with such a smooth transition. Norm's artwork, especially page 21, helped this change of pace even more, showing that when he's hot, he's hot.

Although this letter has been unending praise so far, I must say that the last panel on the last page was the most ridiculously campy moment I have ever seen in a BATMAN comic. I'm just glad Batman didn't say, "I'll have a dog named Ace travelling with me!" You would've really gotten me ranting and raving then!

Overall, BATMAN #464 was the best issue since #457. I'm anxiously awaiting Tim Drake's return next issue, a scant fourteen days away.

Robin Rules!
Jason Crase
3022 Huntington Dr.
Arlington Heights, IL 60004

* * * * *

And now for a brief comment on the BATMAN ANNUAL #15...

Dear Bat-men,

I started reading BATMAN comics in '89 when the movie was released. From the time I started reading this title I thought I had seen the best I was going to see, but then comes the BATMAN ANNUAL #15 (ARMAGEDDON 2001 crossover). The first thing that attracted me to it was the mystical power of the front cover, with Batman lurking in the shadows with the 'cuffs on. Secondly the art...the emphasis on Batman's dark, avenging side and the Joker's mad, supposed sanity by Jim Fern, especially the picture of the dead Joker on the fourth to last page, second panel. And last, but definitely not least, the story. Wow, I never expected to see his future depicted like that, what with all his archenemies being killed off, no partner, Alfred so frail. No matter how bleak his future after that future I liked it all, especially the inclusion of Harold and Tim. I love the concept.

Yours faithfully,
Luke Powell
Melbourne
AUSTRALIA

Thanks, Luke. The cover was painted by Scott Hampton, artist of the upcoming BATMAN: NIGHT CRIES graphic novel. If you liked that cover, you're going to love the book.

* * * * *

YOU SCRATCH MY BACK, I'LL SCRATCH YOURS DEPARTMENT: The multi-talented Alan Grant has written a computer game called DEMONIAK. It's produced by Palace Software and is currently available for the Amiga. Plans to release Macintosh and IBM versions proceed apace. I haven't seen it myself, but with Alan at the helm, you can bet it'll be quite a trip.

NEXT ISSUE: Caped Crusader catch criminal? Killer Croc kill Caped Crusader? Killer Croc croak? Be here! Thirty day! Grant/Breyfogle/Mitchell!

—Kelley kinda krazy

From the Den

Ran into my old friend Sergius in The French Quarter the other day. I was there to attend one of my favorite conventions, the New Orleans Science Fiction and Fantasy Festival. I never learned what Sergius was doing in Louisiana.

He hasn't changed much in the 20 or so years since I last spoke with him. He's still lanky, skinny and unkempt, with a bit more in the middle and a bit less on top, though what's there still needs a comb.

Before I could begin the ritual small talk, he began to jabber, as if we'd seen each other only minutes instead of decades earlier. "I just found out something *very important,*" he said. "I found out—pay attention, now, 'cause this is *vital*—how you get into Funky Heaven."

"Oh?"

"You gotta listen to jazz in Preservation Hall right here in the French Quarter and you gotta ride the Cyclone at Coney Island in Brooklyn."

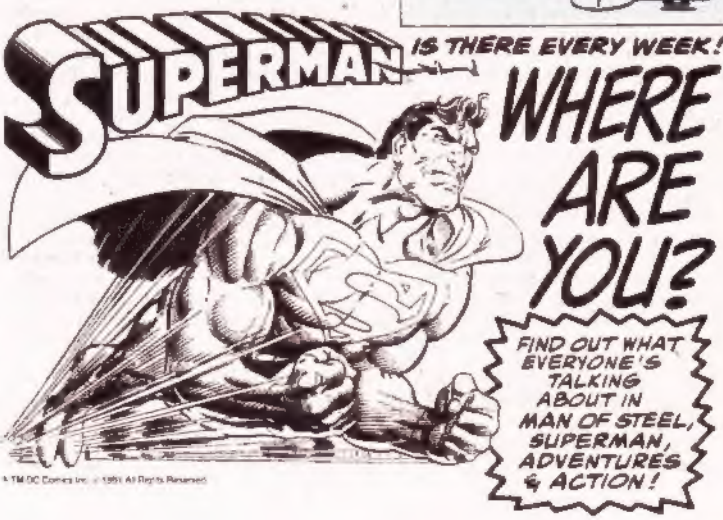
"What's Funky Heaven?" I asked.

He dropped his head, studied the pavement for a full minute, and then stared straight into my eyes. "If you do not upon hearing the words 'Funky Heaven' immediately and totally grok fully and unequivocally and in utter completeness from the micro to the macro of it, in every tiny nuance, with every fiber of your being, the glorious wholeness of both *funkiness* and *heavenliness*, then I am deeply and sincerely afraid that no matter how many Cyclone rides you take and no matter how often you listen to jazz in Preservation Hall you will never grok it at all."

He pivoted and loped off in the direction of Jackson Square.

"What's 'grok' mean?" I yelled after him, but I don't think he heard me.

DENNIS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